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THE MINNESOTA INDIAN  
IN MINNEAPOLIS

# **The Minnesota Indian in Minneapolis**

**A Report of the Indian Committee**

**Fred Berger, Chairman**

*November, 1956*



**COMMUNITY WELFARE COUNCIL**

**404 South Eighth Street**

**Minneapolis 4, Minnesota**





# Community Welfare

## Council OF HENNEPIN COUNTY

404 SOUTH 8th STREET • MINNEAPOLIS 4, MINNESOTA • TELEPHONE FEDERAL 2-5275

January 14, 1957

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Mr. David Dahl, Chairman  
Group Work and Recreation Division  
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Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Dahl:

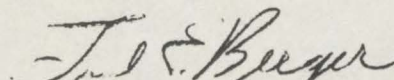
The Indian Committee submits herewith its report.

At your request, I accepted the chairmanship of this Committee, set up on an Ad Hoc basis for the first six months of 1956. During this time the Committee gathered the facts on the situation of new Indian residents of Minneapolis and made this material available to the Community Welfare Council, the City of Minneapolis and the State of Minnesota, particularly the Minnesota Indian Affairs Committee.

The life of the Committee was then extended for six months in order that it might complete its conclusions and recommendations. The Committee devoted many meetings to this task and thoroughly considered its words.

At least two main items were not fully considered, however, and thus are not included in this Report: the idea of an Indian center reserved for Indians only; and the possibility of a Federal relocation program similar to those in Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles. These were discussed at length but no conclusions were reached. The Committee would appreciate an extension of time to consider these matters.

Sincerely,



Fred E. Berger, Chairman  
Indian Committee

FEB:mm

THE MINNESOTA INDIAN  
IN MINNEAPOLIS

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THE MINNESOTA INDIAN IN MINNEAPOLIS

FOREWORD

Minnesota Indians up to a few years ago lived mostly on the reservations in the northern part of the State.

True, there was a good number of Indian families who had come to the City and over a period of years had made a successful adjustment to city life, holding regular jobs, raising families, sending them to school, joining church, using social agency services - much as any other people.

Nevertheless, the large number of Minnesota Indians (mostly Chippewa) were still a part of an older way of life - halfway between an ancient culture and semi-rural, small town culture. There were Indians who were doing well there to, but many more who were not.

A living which depends on wild rice gathering, cutting pulp wood, hunting and fishing, is at best, good for a short-time only and at worst, is near-starvation. Indians in northern Minnesota have never taken to farming. The fur and lumbering trades have been gone for many years. The resort business takes capital and has been largely non-Indian. Local attitudes have been discouraging; long time dependence on the "government," whether Federal or local, has increased the apathy and lethargy already the mood of a people defeated in war a hundred years ago.

In the past few years, several hundred families (at least) have moved away from the reservation to the City. In addition, many single young men have headed for the City, in the hope of getting jobs and a better way of life. Most were unskilled, it seems clear; many were uneducated; few had any knowledge of City life.

Some were unable to make any adjustment and went back to the reservation (for it was "home"); some have done well; a substantial number it seems clear, have tried to maintain contact with both the City and the reservation - moving to the City for a while, then back to the reservation as frustration developed. (Partly this was due to the home ties, partly to expectation of payment under

tribal treaties with the United States Government, partly to rejection of City ways as contrasted with country or woods ways).

Those who stuck it out in the City (and that number is increasing) had troubles with housing, employment, recreation, the law, welfare, etc. Their troubles have been felt throughout the urban community, though they have lived largely in a small area near the business district. Public and private health and welfare agencies, churches and civic groups have become concerned for the welfare of the Indians in Minneapolis and have tried to help. Many have been helpful but they recognize that much remains to be done, both here, throughout the State and in the Federal government.

In this Report is incorporated the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations of the Community Welfare Council Committee which has studied the situation during the past year.



THE MINNESOTA INDIAN IN MINNEAPOLIS

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. EDUCATION

Conclusion

There appears to be considerable need for education for newly-arriving Indians: vocational training for high school students; job training for those of high school age; college education for those who qualify; home economics training for housewives; education as to metropolitan agencies, services and resources.

Our conclusions relate to the Indians in the metropolitan area. Some of these conclusions would appear to apply with equal force to the reservations, where other kinds of education may also be needed, perhaps related to the development of additional economic opportunities in and near the reservations.

Recommendations

- a. At the reservations, the State and Federal Governments should take responsibility for a continuing education program which should prepare Indians for successful living outside the reservation in a program beyond that of the traditional schools and vocational schools. (See Courts "a", Employment "a" and "b", Welfare "b", Housing "a".)
- b. Indian youth in Minneapolis should be given guidance at the high school level in courses where they have the greatest desire, aptitude and capacity.
- c. There should be classes in home management, particularly though not exclusively for Minneapolis Indians, to be offered through the facilities most appropriate for the purpose.

- d. There should be suitable guidance given by the schools and agencies regarding the services of metropolitan agencies, public and private. (This would seem to apply to non-Indians as well.) Appropriate steps should be taken to inform the Indian population of these opportunities. These should be included in the Recreation and Social Life Directory. (See Recreation and Social Life "c")
- e. Special emphasis should be given by the appropriate agency in Minneapolis to counsel the boys or girls at the time they drop out of school prematurely.

## 2. RECREATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

### Conclusions

The Indians coming into Minneapolis have needs for recreation and social life just as other people.

There seem, however, to be at least two important aspects to these needs of Indian people:

- a. The social need for being with other Indians.
- b. The need to develop social life and recreation with non-Indians.

To some extent the Indian community is torn between these needs, with a strong yearning on the part of some for "a place of their own" but a realization by others of the need to become socially a part of the larger community.

Actually there may not be any conflict between the two needs. Various Indians are at various levels of socialization in urban life and participation in Indian social groups does not rule out participation in other social activities.

The chief consideration appears to be that the need for having Indian social life should not interfere with joining in full community life as soon as Indians are ready to do so.

### Recommendations

- a. The Indian organizations should be given all possible aid and encouragement by other organizations. Assistance should be given to the Indian organizations in planning for Indian social and recreational activities.
- b. Organizations providing social group recreation should make special efforts to study the recreation needs and interests of Indians and to include Indians in their membership and programs. Several agencies, such as Elliot Park Neighborhood House and Unity House have made special efforts to bring Indians into their membership. The Indian organizations should assist their people to make full use of the services of these organizations, including neighborhood houses, churches, Y's, park centers and school centers.
- c. A directory of social and recreational opportunities should be immediately developed to inform Indians of available programs and should be distributed through the Indian organizations.

### 3. HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

#### Conclusions

The health situation of the Indian population appears to be substantially the same as for the general population. There are some minor unfavorable variations from the general pattern, as for instance, in the proportion of live birth locally, and in the death rate, but these may be accounted for by the higher mobility of the Indian group in its endeavor to adjust both to urban life and to the reservation life with its continued ties and disciplines.

The somewhat high rate in certain digestive and respiratory diseases suggests the kind of inferior living conditions in which some Indians live. There seems to be a lack of information among Indians about health services available to them.

The ultimate cure for the health problems of Indians in the Twin Cities depends more upon finding a solution to their socio-economic maladjustments than upon conventional medical and public health techniques.

#### Recommendations

- a. Special attention should be given to inviting to and including Indian women and their children in the service of the well-child clinics, the Combined Nursing Service and other related health services.
- b. The various health organizations should seek to include Indians in their educational and service programs.
- c. Indians should be informed of and should inform themselves of medical care available through physicians, hospitals and clinics. This information can be added to the recreational directory. (See Recreation and Social Life "c".)

#### 4. COURTS

##### Conclusions

Indians have been appearing before the Municipal Court in a greater proportion than their percentage of the general population. Among those having difficulties leading to court appearance, the problems appear to arise from several sources including:

- a. Unfamiliarity with city life.
- b. Lack of success in finding jobs or holding them, with consequent discouragement.
- c. Improper use of leisure time.
- d. Poor living conditions.

It seems probable that improvements in this particular general situation will rest upon improvement in the general situation of the Indians coming to Minneapolis.

##### Recommendations

- a. The attention of the social agencies should be directed to the unique difficulties Indian newcomers have in adjusting to city life. It might be desirable to develop a service to help Indians avoid getting involved in the "Skid Row" pattern. (See Education "a", Employment "a", Housing "a" and "b")



- b. It would be desirable to include in police training programs dealing with human relations (which should be a regular part of their training) more specific material on understanding Indians.

## 5. EMPLOYMENT

### Conclusions

Our survey of the job market for Indians disclosed several things, though much more specific information should be gathered about individual experiences. All indications point to a basically unskilled population in large measure not acquainted with the organization of industrial communities.

### Recommendations

- a. A vocational training program at the reservation would lessen considerably the problems Indians have in obtaining employment when they come to the city.
- b. Some agency or group of agencies in Minneapolis should consider establishing a vocational service program (including employment counseling) specifically for Indians who are recent arrivals in the city. Personnel for this service should preferably be identified as Indian and should function as a liaison between the Indian job seekers, employment agencies, unions, employer organizations, vocational training institutions and others influential in the labor market. (See Welfare "b", Housing "a" and Education "a".)

## 6. WELFARE

### Conclusions

Due to their non-settled status, some needy Indian families do not meet the legal requirements for public welfare assistance from local resources. Factors contributing to their non-settled status are moving back and forth to their home counties, maintenance and medical relief, workhouse sentences and other statutory exclusions. Settlement and eligibility for certain welfare services remains in the county of original settlement until a new one is

established elsewhere. (Note: "non-settled status" refers to lack of legal residence, i.e. 1 or 2 years uninterrupted residence while not on relief.)

Recommendations

- a. While not within jurisdiction of this committee, we recommend that the location of industries similar to that in Rolla, North Dakota be encouraged and fostered in cities and towns adjacent to the reservations. Among benefits accruing would be the following:
  - (1) Direct benefits to the community concerned through increased payroll and added business.
  - (2) Opportunity for employment of the Indian in a familiar setting.
  - (3) Long range benefits to the Indian by way of assimilation and orientation to way of life off the reservation and still not a completely strange situation; also assimilation of the children into normal community living through contacts in school, church, play and other activities, learning of employment skills that would be readily saleable on other labor markets.
- b. We would recommend the establishment of an integrated state-wide approach to Indian problems with coordination of all agencies, such as relief, medical care, relocation, rehabilitation, etc. This would involve responsibility, direction and coordination on a uniform state-wide basis with full reimbursement to all local governmental units for relief expenditures made. This should be financed by the Federal government as already requested and/or by the State of Minnesota. We make this recommendation for the following reasons.
  - (1) It is believed that a more effective, better coordinated, better financed plan can be worked out if the whole State is concerned and involved.
  - (2) Although manifested locally, the Indian problem is really state-wide and should be of state-wide concern -- financially and socially.
  - (3) A well coordinated plan would tend to prevent relocation failures and creation of problems such as this community has been studying.

- (4) Any approach solely on a local level will not solve the problems but may in fact inadvertently aggravate them by encouraging further ill-prepared movement in the hope of bettering the Indians' lot. (See Education "a", Employment "a" and "b", and Housing "a".)

## 7 HOUSING

### Conclusions

Indians coming into Minneapolis from the reservations have a difficult time in many ways but particularly in housing. Having no furniture in many cases, families have to rent relatively high-priced furnished rooms. Many live in the poorest kind of sub-standard housing.

Many of these families do not complain, because in some respects this housing may be more comfortable than the shacks they live in on the reservations. Nevertheless, whether the Indian families realize it or not, the total environment is bad and represents a serious hazard to Indian children and young people, morally, physically, and in relation to their educational opportunities. The community cannot afford to let such conditions persist. They breed delinquency and backwardness.

### Recommendations

- a. With the help of the Indian organizations, the State and Federal government should initiate a broad program at the reservation, to help Indian people who need help, improve their standard of housing, health and living generally, so as to prepare them for modern living whether at the reservation or in the city. This program could be coordinated with the state-wide approach to Indian problems suggested by the Welfare Task Committee (see preceding recommendations which are inclusive of this.)
- b. In cooperation with organizations or officials on or near the reservations, an adequate program should be provided in Minneapolis to give incoming Indian families guidance at the time of their arrival, so that they will not fall victim to substandard housing and related difficulties. Excellent work is already being done by some Minneapolis agencies but they cannot cope with the total need.

- c. In Minneapolis, it would be good to establish a committee to coordinate the efforts of the various agencies who assist Indian families with housing problems, job problems, welfare, etc.
- d. One or more agencies might consider a plan to gather, store and distribute furniture, as seem wise, to Indian and other families, to help them rent unfurnished rather than furnished rooms.
- e. Continued efforts should be made by the proper authority (the Health Department) to strengthen the enforcement of the Minneapolis housing code.



May 1956

INDIAN COMMITTEE

Fred E. Berger, Chairman

Task Committees

Welfare:

Arnold Gruber, Hennepin County Welfare Board; Co-Chairman  
Arnold Matta, Minneapolis Division of Public Relief; Co-Chairman  
Lt. Col. T.H. Martin, Divisional Commander, Salvation Army  
Mrs. Michael Dauphinais, American Indians, Inc.  
Arlo Leinback, Traveler's Aid Society

Courts and Legal Problems:

Judge Luther Sletten, Municipal Court; Chairman  
L. Howard Bennett, N.A.A.C.P.

Education:

Dr. Rufus A. Putnam, Superintendent, Minneapolis Public Schools; Chairman  
John Pemberton, Twin Cities Chippewa Council  
Dr. Henry Allen, University of Minnesota  
Miss Julia Breidenbach, Visiting Teacher, Phillips Junior High School

Recreation and Social Life:

Arthur Goldman, Director, Elliot Park Neighborhood House; Chairman  
Mrs. Eunice Cain, Mayor's Committee on Human Rights  
Miss Myrtle Steenson, Unity House  
Mrs. Lucy Cobb, Pillsbury Settlement House  
Miss Ruth Hornby, Pillsbury Settlement House  
Dan Hardy, Elliot Park Neighborhood House  
Richard Jorgenson, Minneapolis Park Board  
Virgil Brown, Citizens Club

Employment:

Shelton Granger, Executive, Minneapolis Urban League; Chairman  
Mort Calford, Minnesota State Employment Service  
Mrs. Keith McIntire, American Indians, Inc.  
Arthur Goldman, Director, Elliot Park Neighborhood House  
R.W. Mitchell, President, Battis and Battis Employment Service  
William V. Sinnott, former Financial Secretary, Central Labor Union  
Arlo Leinback, Traveler's Aid Society

Health:

Karl R. Lundeberg, M.D., Minneapolis Health Department; Chairman  
Evelyn E. Hartman, M.D., Minneapolis Health Department  
Herman Kleinman, M.D., Minneapolis Health Department  
Miss Julia Hardy, Community Welfare Council, C.I.O. Council  
Miss Jean Roberts, Minneapolis Health Department  
Miss Miriam Shaffer, Visiting Nurse Service  
Miss Corinna Townsend, Minneapolis Health Department

Housing:

Mrs. Opal Gruner, Chairman, Housing Committee; Joint Com. on Equal Opportunity  
Mrs. Phil Robinson, A.D.C., Hennepin County Welfare Board  
Kent Fitzgerald, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Mrs. Margaret Tollefson, Crime Prevention Bureau, Minneapolis  
Arnold Matta, Department of Public Relief  
Mrs. Throckmorton, Department of Public Relief  
Mr. Bauman, assistant Chief, Fire Prevention Bureau  
Fred Hadley, Manager, Sumner Field Houses  
Francis LeQuier, President, Thunderbirds  
Wayne Lightfeather, Member, Thunderbirds  
Mrs. Loretta Iron Moccasin, Member, Thunderbirds  
Miss Ruth Harvey, United Church Committee for Indian Work  
Mrs. Arthur Peterson, United Church Committee for Indian Work  
Miss Gertrude Tennant, Social Worker, University Hospital  
Miss Julia M. Breidenbach, Visiting Teacher, Phillips Junior High School  
Miss Hildegard Holtz, Visiting Teacher, Madison School  
Jerry Monroe, Member, Thunderbirds

Community Welfare Council, Hennepin County:

Omar Schmidt, Executive Director  
Charles F. Wright, Director, Group Work and Recreation Division  
Charles E. King, Research Director  
Eduwin P. Bradley, Director, Family and Child Welfare Division  
Clare Gates, Dr. P.H., Director, Health and Medical Care Division  
David Dahl, Chairman, Group Work and Recreation Division

Other Members of the Committee:

Captain Clifford Bailey, Crime Prevention Bureau  
Edward Beaulieu, American Indians, Inc.  
Mrs. A. Whittier Day, Community Welfare Council  
Miss Eleanor Kinunen, Visiting Teacher, South High School  
Mrs. Sally Luther, State Representative  
Father T.F. Meagher, Catholic Welfare Association  
Russel Kelly, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Mrs. Consuelo Gosnell, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Ray Lappegaard, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Welfare  
State Senator Gerald Mullin  
G.M. Ellenson, Cass County Welfare Board

WELFARE TASK COMMITTEE

To: Mr. Fred Berger, Chairman, Indian Committee, Community Welfare Council,  
Minneapolis

From: Arnold Gruber and Arnold Matta, Co-Chairmen, Welfare Sub-committee

RE: WELFARE AND GENERAL RELIEF NEEDS OF INDIAN POPULATION IN MINNEAPOLIS AND  
HENNEPIN COUNTY -- FINAL REPORT

BACKGROUND:

This sub-committee on "Indian Welfare" was appointed on February 8, 1956 as one of nine "task committees" set up on ad hoc basis to explore and report on essential problems, scope, resources, and unmet welfare needs of the present and potential Indian population in Minneapolis. Membership of the Welfare Sub-committee is as follows:

Arnold Gruber, Hennepin County Welfare Board, Co-Chairman  
Arnold Matta, Minneapolis Division of Public Relief, Co-Chairman  
Lt. Col. T.H. Martin, Divisional Commander, Salvation Army  
Mrs. Michael Dauphinais, American Indians, Incorporated  
Mr. Arlo Leinback, Traveler's Aid Society

Activities included informal conferences by chairmen with representatives of Community Welfare Council on February 14, a meeting with Minnesota Deputy Commissioner of Public Welfare on February 27, telephone clearance with all committee members, reviews of caseloads in agencies represented, several informal conferences with Gerald Mullin, and participation in all meetings of the over-all Indian Committee to date. Observations and recommendations are primarily those of Co-Chairmen who represent the two major public agencies involved and may not reflect the unanimous opinion of the entire committee.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Hennepin County operates under the township system, thus placing the responsibility for general relief administration under fifty different municipalities and townships.
2. The total Indian population in Minnesota is stated to be approximately 18,000 of whom an estimated 7,000 reside in Minneapolis. Federal census figures for April, 1950 show a State population of 12,533 and urban population of 1,535. It is our opinion that the total present Indian population in Minneapolis is substantially greater than census reports for reasons of population growth since 1950, transient characteristics of reservation Indians and failure to enumerate as Indians on urban census counts the many families who have successfully adjusted and were not so identified.

3. We recognize the many theoretical advantages and reasons for resettlement of Indian citizens in urban centers, namely; diversified employment opportunities, better housing accommodations, educational resources, racial anonymity, social and cultural inter-action with relatives and friends. However, authorities have indicated that Minneapolis does not offer sufficient opportunity to the non-resident Indian in areas of employment or housing to justify a relocation center here.

4. We find the newly arrived Indian family to have little or no financial resources and are economically dependent on employment earnings. The Indian frequently has very little to sell in the way of skills derived either from training or experience. Unless or until poor relief settlement is acquired in this community (two years of uninterrupted residence without financial assistance) one is not entitled to relief assistance beyond emergency care, unless forthcoming from county of former residence. Because economic security is so basic and interrelated with social adjustment in other areas (i.e.; school attendance, health, adequate child care, conformance with laws and community mores), it must be realistically recognized.

5. Experience of local relief-giving agencies indicates a reluctance of Indians to make known emergent financial needs or apply until or unless settlement has been acquired. This implies a fear that they may be returned to place of former residence or jeopardize relocation rights. It also implies unmet relief needs far greater than recorded experience or active caseloads of relief giving agencies.

6. While no racial distinction is made in social agency records of relief expenditures or case counts, the following figures represent a conservative report by Hennepin County Welfare Board on Indian Clients as of January 1, 1956:

OAA - 12 elderly Indians received \$6,918.22 in 1955  
4 received OAA here from other counties.

ADC - 97 Indian children and 33 adults in 45 cases received ADC from HCWB in 1955 for total amount of \$67,813.78.

AB - 2 Indians received \$567.36 from HCWB in 1955.

Children under Department of Public Welfare Guardianship

17 Indian children received \$15,447.78 from HCWB in 1955.  
8 Indian children resided here with support from other counties.  
2 Indian children - casework services.

Protective Services

32 Indian children from 10 families received support from HCWB totaling \$10,741.05 in 1955.  
27 Indian children with settlement elsewhere.  
25 Indian children receiving casework services only.



Unmarried Mother Services

2 Indian unmarried mothers and 3 children received \$397.30 from HCWB in 1955.

42 Indian UM's received service only in 1955.

7 Indian UM's from other counties received service in 1955.

7. While records of the Minneapolis Division of Public Relief do not identify racial minority groups as such, their findings indicate that 39 Indian families received direct relief assistance during April, 1956. Figures were not obtained on number of medically indigent Indian families receiving care at Minneapolis General Hospital.

8. State-wide experience indicates ratio of financial indigency among Indian families, based on general relief caseloads and expenditures, to be approximately six times greater than their proportion of total population. Medical indigency is equally critical.

9. Indians move to the urban areas primarily from five northern rural counties of limited resources -- one of which operates under the township relief system. Application interviews indicate some have been given small amounts of \$15.00 or \$20.00 by some welfare Boards and advised to move to the city to find employment. In many cases, serious need arises before a pay check is received. Once the family has moved from its home county, it is frequently difficult to get reimbursement for relief given locally. This is particularly true for medical care given at Minneapolis General Hospital. In many cases, the home county requests return of a family or individual to the Indian hospital for medical care rather than paying for it here.

10. We recognize that Indians as citizens should have the right of movement and individual choice as to place or residence. We also recognize that many Indian families have successfully adjusted in new counties without need for financial assistance; however, it is unreasonable and unrealistic to expect any local community to assume the entire financial burden through local tax assessment for the maintenance and medical relief needs of indigent non-resident on other than emergency basis. We believe the present Federal policy of limiting financial responsibility to Indian on reservations is unsound and artificial. Such arbitrary boundaries in terms of modern day mobility, create unnecessary technical and administrative problems, with responsibility falling on surrounding county governments without resources or inclination to assume such responsibility for indigent Indians.

11. We recognize the urgent need for community planning and constructive rehabilitative services in behalf of the Indian population now residing in our city as distinguished from the potential population of non-resident Indians who may desire to come here. One striking symptom of maladjustment is reflected in the Minneapolis Workhouse admission figures for 1955, which show that 884 or 12% of the 7,307 admissions to the men's section were Indians. 70% of these Indian men were in the age group of 26 to 40. 1955 admissions to the women's section showed that 282 or 54.4% of the 518 total were Indian women.

May 8, 1956

Report of Courts and Legal Problems Task Committee

It is felt by this Committee that most of its work can be done with regard to specific legal problems which may arise in connection with the Indian Problem.

However, a survey was made in the Minneapolis Police Court for a period of 13 days. During that time 450 cases were heard and 72 of those cases involved Indians, or 14 percent of the total. Of these 72 cases involved Indian women. All with the exception of two or three were charged with Drunkenness. Only four of the 72 were regularly employed at the time they were in court.

The great majority of the charges for which the Indians appear in court is for Drunkenness and difficulties arising out of Drunkenness such as Disorderly Conduct, Lewd and Indecent Conduct, Assault and Battery, etc. Most of those appearing during the 13-day period had prior records. Due to the failure over the years to get any response and due to their mistrust of us, it has been very difficult to work with the Indians through our probation office although we have tried many, many times. As a consequence most of these offenders end up in the Workhouse. It is the feeling of the Court that over a long period of time, the percentage of Indians appearing in the Minneapolis Police Court will run from 14 percent to 20 percent.

It is the feeling of the Committee that if a center for Indians is established in Minneapolis, such as a relocation center, that the records of the Minneapolis Municipal Court could be used to good advantage in screening the Indians who could or would be helped to establish themselves in the city and the Court is willing to cooperate in any way it can.

Respectfully submitted,

Luther Sletten /s/  
Judge Luther Sletten  
L. Howard Bennett

LS:rk

EDUCATION

TASK COMMITTEE

Dr. Rufus A. Putnam

SURVEY OF PROBLEMS AFFECTING INDIAN CHILDREN  
IN THE MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1. Schools where most Indian children have been enrolled:

Phillips Junior High School, 2218 13th Avenue South

Madison Elementary School, 1509 Fifth Avenue South

Emerson Elementary School, 1421 Spruce Place

Washington Elementary School, 723 S. Sixth Street

Clay Elementary School, 2012 S. Fourth Street

2. Problems affecting Indian children:

- a. In some cases, the families are reluctant to enroll children in school upon arrival in the city.
- b. Newcomers to the city move in with other Indian families, which makes it difficult for the school attendance department to secure an accurate census.
- c. New Indian families coming into the city come from primarily two tribes. There is a lack of leadership, although there is a closeness with their own group.
- d. Indian families fail to follow up on the attendance of their children.
- e. There is a certain amount of suspicion and hostility toward the white people, which makes communication with them most difficult.
- f. Children of high school age are frequently shy and withdraw from mixed groups. Children in the elementary schools are more amenable to mixed groups.
- g. It is frequently difficult to talk with the Indian children and, therefore, rather hard to converse with them.
- h. The visiting teachers have found that in most cases they cannot talk to the mother about the problems of her children because the father is recognized as the head of the family and the one who makes decisions.

- i. The children lack proper clothing. The City Department of Public Relief and the Public and Parochial School Child Welfare Committee of the Minneapolis Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, Inc. have attempted to furnish clothing.
  - j. New families to the city move where other Indians now live, which creates a concentration of Indian families in certain sections of the city.
  - k. A few of the Indian children leave during the spring of the year, to return to the reservation to work on farms.
3. How the schools have met some of the problems:
- a. Securing clothing from the City Department of Public Relief and the Public and Parochial School Child Welfare Committee of the Minneapolis Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, Inc.
  - b. In-service training for teachers having Indian children in their classes.
  - c. Work with Indian organizations to correct some of the problems.

RAP:re

3-15-56



April, 1956

REPORT  
TASK COMMITTEE ON RECREATION  
AND SOCIAL LIFE

Members: Eunice Cain, Myrtle Steenson, Lucy Cobb, Ruth Hornby, Dan Hardy, Dick Jorgenson, Virgil Brown, Arthur Goldman, Chrm.

The committee first examined the current use of existing recreation and informal education by Indians. All the settlement houses reported some participation, ranging from 5 to 20 youngsters. Gethsemane Episcopal Church, 905 Fourth Avenue South, has a program for some children and adults. The Park Department reports that Franklin Steele Playground, Portland Avenue and East 16th Street, gets a lot of use from Indian young people.

There are three major Indian Organizations that supply leisure time activity: American Indians, Inc., in addition to their regular meetings, conducts pot luck suppers and has an annual Christmas Party; Thunderbirds, Inc. has some evening teen-age activity; The Twin City Council of the Chippewa Tribe concerns itself with problems of the Chippewa.

Those representing leisure time agencies indicated that the Indian children who have come into the programs have gotten along well. They come from the families who have integrated and have been established in the Community for some time.

Unity House, 250 17th Avenue North, has an employment service that has 35 Indian adults enrolled.

The Indian and His Needs

So much of the need for recreation activity stems from the various problems in living the Indian finds as he comes into the Community. Children, for instance, have a need just to have space, because of the very crowded housing conditions. The child and his family coming into the community are fearful and an agency and desks and staff conjure up the previous relationship with governmental agencies. Because he has been made dependent, there

has been little opportunity to exercise leadership and, consequently, there are fears and hostility toward the whites. The young adult or adult, in his need to socialize tends to find his friends at a bar and this socialized drinking may lead to alcoholism. This, the committee felt, is different than the psychotic drinking one finds with true alcoholics.

Because of the bad living experience, there is the real pull to go back to the reservations. There is much mobility among the Indians. This may very well make the creation of satisfactory recreation and social life more difficult.

April, 1956

Memo to the Committee on Indian Affairs of the  
Community Welfare Council of Hennepin County

From: "Task Force" on Employment

Mort Calford, Minnesota State Employment Service  
Arlo Leinbach, Executive Secretary, Travelers Aid Society  
Mrs. Keith McIntire  
Arthur Goldman, Executive Director, Elliot Park Neighborhood House  
R.W. Mitchell, President, Battis and Battis Employment Service  
William V. Sinnott, former Financial Secretary, Central Labor Union

Shelton B. Granger, Executive Secretary, Minneapolis Urban League,  
Chairman

Date: March 15, 1956

The "Task Force" held two meetings. The first, on February 29, was designed for general discussion on procedure. At this time it was decided that this particular "task force" would not increase its number but would rely on the associations that each member brought to the committee as additional sources of information. It was further decided that the committee would not attempt to do a detailed study to the point of analyzing statistics, trying to detect trends, etc. in a way that would be valid in a research sense. The alternative course chosen was to ask the members from the private employment representative, the public employment representative, the organized labor representative and the Urban League representative to inquire further of colleagues, as well as personal agency experience listed below:

1. Whether there has been a noticeable increase in Indian applicants for employment in the past year.
2. Whether the agencies have been successful in finding suitable employment for Indian applicants.
3. Whether employers are receptive to the idea of employing Indians.
4. What are the skills possessed by such applicants.
5. Whether employment agencies seem to have any particular policy with respect to Indian applicants.

The second meeting of the committee was held March 13th. At this time the information gathered was discussed and can be summarized as follows.

R. W. Mitchell, President, Battis and Battis Employment Service:

"There has been no noticeable increase in Indian job hunting applicants in the last year.

"In general we are as successful in finding suitable employment for Indians as any other group of people.

"Briefly, the employer clientele are receptive to employing Indians.

"Skills and professional abilities possessed by recognized Indian applicants apparently are rare.

"Private employment agencies policy in working with Indians: We offer a service to the public and they (the Indians) are a part of the public, therefore, we work with them as we do with all groups.

"To summarize, we have had limited experience as to volume of Indian applicants. Briefly, we feel the Indian needs financial assistance for the first thirty days while he finds employment. Further it would be very helpful if he received further training in some vocation or profession before seeking employment."

Mr. Mort Calford, from Minnesota State Employment Service, had been ill during the period of operation of the "Task Force." However, the Chairman conferred with Arthur S. Broberg, Director, who was able to relate in general terms his office's observations.

In summary, Mr. Broberg stated that there seems to be no special problem in the placement of Indian persons, or any people for that matter, who have skills that are in demand at the time of application. They do not maintain records that would indicate the amount of increase in Indian applicants, and their files do not reflect classifications according to skills with any segment of the population. He stated that, while there had been some cases of employer's complaining of non-dependability that had come to their attention with respect to Indian people, these were very few and did not seem to present a particular problem.

However, he made the observation that there seems to be some need for a point of initial contact for Indians coming into the city that could serve as a point for working with the employment service, that it may be well to think in terms of providing means for new arrivals to spend enough time in the city to arrange for employment.

One observation that his office has is that some of the applicants are unable to stay in the cities long enough to get a suitable placement.

The Urban League experience showed that there has been an increase in the past three months in the number of Indians applying for vocational services. The League has been successful in some cases in finding suitable employment, and there is no noticeable resistance on the part of employer clientele. Very few Indian applicants had specific skills. The breakdown from March 1st revealed one skilled worker, four semi-skilled and the remainder of a total of 15, unskilled.

The Urban League's policy is the same for all applicants for service.

Mr. Sinnott's inquiries in labor circles indicated that there seemed to be no special problem that Indians face in obtaining union membership, and that the organized labor community had not developed special policies with respect to them. A check with the Minneapolis F.E.P.C. indicated that no complaints of employment discrimination had been filed by Indians thus far during 1956.

2908 Colfax Avenue South  
Minneapolis 8, Minnesota

March 19, 1956

Memorandum

To: Sheldon B. Granger, Executive Director, Minneapolis Urban League

From: Kent FitzGerald, Relocation Representative, Bureau of Indian Affairs

In connection with the report of the Sub-Committee on Employment to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Community Welfare Council, you may be interested in some of the information which I have gathered during the past month with regard to employment opportunities for Indians in Minneapolis. The observations made below are based on interviews with forty-three of Minneapolis' larger employers, fifty-three job seekers, and fourteen employed Indians.

First, let me say that I would agree generally with the observations and conclusions of your Committee, with the exception of the information developed with regard to the utilization by Indians of fee employment agencies. I find an increasing trend by Indians to look to fee employment agencies as a resource to locating jobs.

My checking with the Minnesota State Employment Service, employers, and Indians - both job seekers and persons who are steadily employed - leads me to the following conclusions:

1. There is no serious problem of discrimination against Indians on the part of employers. In those plants where the employers are aware of Indians in their work force, employers consider them to be apt learners and effective workers, and rate their performance from "average" to "outstanding."
2. Indians are working in many plants where they are not recognized as Indians.
3. That portion of the population which is experiencing difficulty in finding employment is composed principally of recent arrivals, including many who move back and forth between Minneapolis and the reservation areas.
4. The average newcomer is handicapped in locating and holding steady employment in the following ways:
  - a. Lack of formal education and work experience, which is considered qualifying for a major portion of the kind of industry which exists in Minneapolis;

b. Lack of finances to carry themselves until their first pay day if they are successful in locating steady employment, (a high proportion of the fifty-three job seekers I have interviewed personally have not even had bus fare to go out on job referrals);

c. Poor grooming, which is closely tied to their lack of finances, and kind of housing they are living in the city while they are seeking work. Many arrive in the city without even a change of clothes. They stay with friends or relatives who are living in cramped quarters, and more frequently than not have completely inadequate facilities for maintaining personal cleanliness;

d. Lack of knowledge of the kinds of jobs in the city for which they might qualify or where to find some jobs;

e. Lack of know-how in completing employment application forms and conducting themselves in an employment interview;

A real fear that they are not acceptable to employers. Over 90% of those I have talked to have never applied direct to an employer for a job.

5. The principal employment resource which a very large portion of the newcomers are using is the Casual Labor Division of the Minneapolis Office of the Minnesota State Employment Service. This works to their disadvantage in two ways:

a. The kind of employment available through this office is day labor and results in the worker building up a work record of a day here and a day there; if he should be fortunate enough some time later to be interviewed for steady employment, the average employment interviewer can easily conclude that the applicant is not seriously interested in steady employment, and he very likely will not get favorable consideration unless he can explain why he has been working so intermittently;

b. Utilizing this resource throws the average newcomer into the company of a group of men who are largely transients and lacking in stability, which constitutes a serious hazard with which the average newcomer from the reservation is inadequately equipped to deal.

Kent FitzGerald  
Relocation Representative

Minneapolis  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM  
March 14, 1956

TO: Mr. Fred Berger  
Chairman, Ad Hoc Indian Committee  
Community Welfare Council

FROM: Dr. Karl R. Lundeborg, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Indian Health Needs.\*\*

SUBJECT: HEALTH STATUS OF INDIANS IN MINNEAPOLIS

Available estimates indicate that between 3,500 and 5,000 Indians now live in Minneapolis. The influx of this minority group has been rapid within the past few years. In 1940, there were fewer than 600 living here. By 1950, the number had probably doubled but was less than 1600.

The majority of the Indians are coming to the city from other areas of Minnesota - the reservations and other sections - but a sizeable number are also moving here from North and South Dakota.

The Indians, or at least those with known health problems, are living in the central section of the city within an area roughly bounded by the Mississippi River on the east, Franklin Avenue on the south, Lyndale Avenue on the west and Plymouth Avenue on the north. They are living in the overcrowded rundown sections of the city within this area where rent is low and accommodations correspondingly poor.

#### Known Health Problems

The apparent mobility of the Indian population within the city at present makes it difficult to obtain reliable information on the health status and needs of this group.

The resident death rate for Minneapolis Indians is phenomenally low - less than two per 1,000 population - compared with the normal rate for city residents of nine to eleven. This would indicate either that:

1. The estimate of the Indian population here is too large, or
2. The Indians leave the city to die and do not claim residence here, or
3. They are not staying in the city on a permanent basis, or
4. Only the younger Indians are coming to the city.



The average age on death for resident Indians from Minneapolis in 1953 was 37 years compared with 46 for all Indians in Minnesota that year and 68 for all Minneapolis residents.

Included among the eight leading causes of death for Indians in Minneapolis from 1950 through 1954 are four which do not appear among the leading causes for the population as a whole - diseases of the digestive system, diseases of the circulatory system (other than heart), homicide and tuberculosis. (See Table 1). The unusually high mortality from the first two of these diseases is always found where problems of inadequate diet, poor health habits, and poor sanitation and living conditions exist.

From data available, infant and maternal mortality does not seem to be a problem as yet among Indians living in the city. (See Table 2). Many Indian women apparently return to the reservations to have their babies. This may have some effect on present mortality figures since these people may not report the city as their residence in registering the birth or death.

The reported incidence of tuberculosis and gonorrhea among Indians here are significantly greater than for the remainder of city residents. (See Table 3). With the exception of infectious hepatitis in 1954, the other communicable diseases apparently are not a serious problem among Indians in Minneapolis at the present time, although this may be due to failure of reporting rather than to an absence of a problem.

Venereal Disease, alcoholism, tuberculosis and bad housing are the outstanding health problems. All of these are inter-related and have their basis in a fundamental socio-economic evil, namely maladjustment to the industrial life of the big city. The tuberculosis attack rate in our Indians is five to ten times higher than for Whites and the venereal disease rate may be 30 times as high. Significant, however, is the fact that few Indians die of tuberculosis, indicating that this minority group is not cut off from modern treatment methods. As to venereal disease the high attack rate is limited pretty well to the transient and unsettled portion of the Indian population and is directly and closely connected with its twin evil of alcoholism. Both in turn have their genesis in maladjustment to a life for which this neglected social group is not prepared. It is very significant that the Indian women affected by venereal disease and alcoholism are not prostitutes, in the ordinary sense, although court and Health Department records indicate that sexual promiscuity is common among them. This in itself has become a real problem for the city legal and police authorities.

This Subcommittee feels that the gravest threat to the Indian's health and welfare is found in the terrible housing situation which confronts many newcomers when they arrive in the City. This matter is dealt with by a separate committee. However, we desire to emphasize that of the four immediate physical requirements of man -- air, water, food, and shelter -- the most inadequate for our Minneapolis Indians is shelter and that without safe hygienic, and comfortable housing, there can be no satisfactory solution to the health problems (mental and physical ) of the Indian in our midst.

Preventive Medical Services

In general, it can be said that Indian adults and children living in the Twin Cities have available to them all the free preventive medical services that are available to other citizens of these communities. There is no residence requirement; the financial requirement is the same as for others, namely an income under \$265.00 for a family of three with an additional thirty dollars for each additional member of the family. Indians are thus eligible to attend the city operated immunization and well child clinics. They are likewise eligible to attend clinics where dental care is given. There are clinics for prenatal care available at the Minneapolis General Hospital and at the University Hospital. But attendance at these requires a residence period of two years. The outpatient clinic of the Glen Lake Sanatorium which is located in Minneapolis offers its diagnostic services to all residents regardless of the length of residence. The problem of hospitalization, however, is more complicated in case an active case of tuberculosis is found.\*

\* From PREVENTIVE MEDICAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO INDIANS IN MINNESOTA, Minnesota - Department of Health, Division of Disease Prevention and Control, December 27, 1955.

\*\* Subcommittee on Indian Health Needs included:

Karl R. Lundeberg, M.D., Chairman, Minneapolis Health Department

Evelyn E. Hartman, M.D., Minneapolis Health Department

Herman Kleinman, M.D., Minnesota Health Department

Julia Hardy, Community Welfare Council

Jean Roberts, Minneapolis Health Department

Miriam Shaffer, Visiting Nurse Service

Corinna Townsend, Minneapolis Health Department

Table 1.

LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH AMONG  
INDIANS IN MINNEAPOLIS  
1950-1954

ALL CAUSES.....	44
Heart Disease.....	8
*Diseases of the Digestive System.....	5
*Diseases of the Circulatory System...	5
Pneumonia.....	4
*Homicide.....	4
*Tuberculosis.....	4
Cancer.....	3
Accidents.....	3
All Others.....	8

\* Do not appear in the first ten causes of death for the population as a whole.

Table 2.

INFANT AND MATERNAL  
DEATHS AND DEATHS FROM ALL CAUSES  
INDIAN RESIDENTS OF MINNEAPOLIS  
1952-1954

	Total 1952-1954	Annual Rate
Infant Deaths.....	1	*
Maternal Deaths.....	0	*
Deaths from All Causes.	10	1.1**

\* Birth data not available at present

\*\* Rate per 1,000 population using 3,000 as estimated population for 1953.

Table 3.

REPORTED CASES OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE  
AMONG INDIANS AND ALL RACES IN MINNEAPOLIS  
1953-1955

	<u>Among Indians</u>		<u>All Races</u>	
	<u>Cases</u> <u>1953-55</u>	<u>Yearly</u> <u>Rate*</u>	<u>Cases</u> <u>1953-55</u>	<u>Yearly</u> <u>Rate</u>
Diphtheria.....	1	8.3	38	2.4
Infectious Hepatitis.....	9	75.0	780	48.7
Meningitis, Epidemic.....	0	0	30	1.9
Poliomyelitis.....	0	0	423	26.4
Scarlet Fever.....	2	16.7	1036	64.7
Typhoid Fever.....	0	0	3	0.2
Tuberculosis, Active.....	20	166.7	538	33.6
Syphilis.....	8	66.7	291	18.2
Gonorrhea.....	228	1900.0	1350	84.4

\* Cases per 100,000 population per year. Indian population estimated as 4,000 in 1954; total city, as 533,460.

Table 4.

NON RESIDENT CASES OF TUBERCULOSIS  
REPORTED IN MINNEAPOLIS BY STATE OF RESIDENCE  
1951-1955

	<u>1955</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1951</u>
TOTAL.....	29	31	37	26	6
Minnesota.....	14	18	31	15	3
North Dakota.....	6	8	4	5	1
South Dakota.....	9	3	2	4	0
Nebraska.....	0	0	0	0	1
Montana.....	0	1	0	1	0
Wisconsin.....	0	1	0	1	1

Minneapolis Health Department  
March 14, 1956

Minnesota Department of Health  
Section of Vital Statistics  
R.N. Barr, M.D., State Registrar

Indian Births and Deaths in Minnesota, 1953 - 1955

Indian Health, as reflected in vital statistics records, has remained favorable during the past three years. The birth rate of over 40 per 1,000 estimated population is almost double that of the white population while the death rate of less than 9.0 per thousand is equal to, or below the level maintained by the white population. However, the death rate is perhaps understated because a part of the Indian population is absorbed into the white population each year and their identity is lost. A summary of important vital ratios for the past three years is shown below. All figures are for Minnesota resident Indians.

	Number			Rates*		
	1953	1954	1955	1953	1954	1955
Live births	579	651	682	39.4	44.0	45.5
Stillbirths	20	15	14	34.5	23.0	20.5
Infant deaths (under 1 year)	20	27	28	34.5	41.5	41.1
Maternal deaths	1	-	-	1.7	0.0	0.0
Deaths - All causes	132	120	121	9.0	8.1	8.1
Ratio of births to deaths	4.4	5.4	5.6			
Estimated population	14,700	14,800	15,000			

\*Live births and deaths per 1,000 estimated population. All other rates per 1,000 live births. 1955 figures are provisional.

The infant death rate for Indians is almost double that of the white population in Minnesota. The stillbirth ratio is also higher than the ratio for whites, although the ratios for 1954 and 1955 are much improved over the 1953 ratio. No maternal deaths occurred among the Indians during 1954 and 1955.

A comparison of certain death rates for the Indian and White residents of Minnesota reveals interesting contrasts for the two groups. Indian rates per 100,000 estimated population cover a three year span while the white rates are for 1953 and 1954 only.

	Indian Death Rates per 100,000 Est. Pop.			White Death Rates per 100,000 Pop.	
	1953	1954	1955*	1953	1954
All causes	898.0	810.8	806.7	947.6	884.0
Communicable diseases	136.0	81.1	153.3	48.2	33.2
Pneumonia-Influenza	(81.6)	(60.8)	(106.7)	(33.1)	(22.4)
Tuberculosis (all forms)	(27.2)	(0.0)	(26.7)	(6.4)	(4.3)
Accidental deaths	163.3	89.2	93.3	57.4	53.5
Suicide-homicide	20.4	0.0	0.0	11.1	10.8
Natural causes					
Heart disease	176.9	155.4	186.7	351.4	330.7
Cancer (Malignant neoplasma)	47.6	94.6	86.7	151.6	152.0
Intracranial vascular lesions	115.6	40.5	33.3	123.2	115.6
All other causes	238.2	250.0	253.4	204.7	188.2

\*1955 Data provisional

Communicable disease and accidental death rates are particularly high among the Indian population although a great improvement occurred in the accidental death rate between 1954 and 1955. The rates for the leading degenerative diseases, Heart disease, Cancer and Intracranial lesions among the Indians are well below the level for the white population.

April 2, 1956

REPORT OF THE HOUSING TASK COMMITTEE

Mrs. Opal Gruner, Chairman

On March 13, 1956 the Housing Task Committee met at the Citizens Aid Building. The following people were present:

Aid to Dependent Children  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Crime Prevention Bureau  
Department of Public Relief  
Dept. of Public Welfare  
Fire Prevention Bureau  
Summer Field Homes  
Thunderbird Organization

Mrs. Phil Robinson  
Mr. Kent Fitzgerald  
Mrs. Margaret Tollefson  
Mr. Arnold Matta  
Mrs. Throckmorton  
Mr. Bauman, Assistant Chief  
Mr. Fred Hadley, Manager  
Mr. Francis Le Quier, President  
Mr. Wayne Lightfeather  
Mr. Jerry Monroe  
Mrs. Loretta Iron Moccasin

United Church Committee for  
Indian Work

Miss Ruth Harvey  
Mrs. Arthur Peterson  
Miss Gertrude Tennant, Social Worker  
Miss Julia M. Breidenbach, Phillips  
Junior High  
Miss Hildegard Holtz, Madison School

University Hospital  
Visiting Teachers

Community Welfare Council  
Group & Recreation Division  
Chairman Housing Task Committee

Mr. Charles Wright  
Mrs. Opal Gruner

Mr. Chester Everett, Housing Inspector of the Public Health Department and the United Church Committee for Indian Work sent written reports, and telephone consultations were held with Mr. John Huebner, chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Housing and Mr. Talbot Jones, Project Planner for the Minneapolis Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

HOUSING CONDITIONS REPORTED.

Geographical Areas.

An area bounded on the south by Franklin Avenue, on the west by Nicollet Avenue south to Grant Street, on Grant Street east to 4th Avenue South, and on 4th Avenue South north to Washington Avenue South, bounded on the east by Cedar Avenue South was described by Chester Everett of the Health Department as housing the greatest concentration of Indian families. Conditions were reported to be very bad along Olson Highway. The United Church Committee for Indian Work, which has been working to find better housing for Indian families, reports location of the 494 families listed in their records as follows:

### Dilapidation

In the type of housing where many Indian families are housed, broken windows are not replaced but are boarded up, there are no screens in the summer nor storm windows in the winter, doorknobs are replaced by ropes, fallen plaster or holes in the walls or doors are mended with slabs of cheap compo-board, stair rails are shaky and unsafe. One reason that the Indians do not complain is that in many cases they have come from even worse conditions on the reservations. One woman, for example, said that, even with a broken window stuffed up with a rag, the apartment was warmer than her home on the reservation had been.'

There is a great shortage of plumbing. In some cases families have to carry all the water they use up a flight of steps, and carry it down again when they are through with it. In other cases running water is to be had only in hallways, and there is no hot water. A small 8 watt night light may be the only light in an inside bathroom. There are many basement apartments -- small cramped rooms with windows boarded up. Under one notorious apartment building which every agency knows, the tenants used to go in at the back door, under the furnace pipes, to a room carved out underground. It had one light. The tenants had to go outside and upstairs to a common toilet.

### Fire Hazards

In such surroundings fire hazards are numerous. In most of the converted housekeeping rooms, according to one worker, there is only one electrical outlet, with as many as 5 or 6 cords running from it. In one upstairs apartment which had no heat or light, a long cord had been strung up from downstairs, and extensions from it ran into the other rooms. In many apartments there are poor heating facilities; many use only a small type of laundry stove. Some of the converted buildings do not have the outside stairways prescribed by law. Mr. Bauman of the Fire Prevention Bureau described several instances in which his department had got an order from a judge requiring landlords to move tenants out and make this required improvements. He feels that there is great need of the new Minimum Standards Ordinance, and representatives of the other agencies were in agreement.



### Bad Sanitation, and Health Hazards

Agency workers were concerned about the health hazards which they had seen. One of the visiting teachers reported that there was a great deal of illness among the children; sometimes a child would be out of school most of the winter with colds because his home was not adequately heated. The first period of some schools has to be given over for a bathroom period for some of the children. Not only do they have to use the toilet, but they have no facilities at home for bathing or washing their hands and faces. Nor could their clothing be kept clean. The hospital social worker said that they hesitate to send mothers and new-born babies home to such adverse conditions.

Community kitchens often represent a menace to the health of the community, according to Mrs. Tollefson of the Crime Prevention Bureau. She described an old duplex which had been subdivided into smaller sleeping units with community kitchens. These are likely to be furnished with old ice boxes, some of which have no drainage pans. Garbage is piled in the corners and vermin and rats abound.

### Exorbitant Rents and Rent Exploitation

While there was not much definite information available, it was the opinion of several of the agency workers that many Indians are charged exorbitant rent. There was agreement that some landlords are "very conscious of public assistance" and literally charge all that the law (or the agency) will allow. Landlords have been known to raise the rent when a family goes on relief. One Indian family with five children was living in a house with no screens or storm windows; yet they are paying \$20.00 a week.

One reason that Indians as a group suffer more than others from high rents is that they usually come from the reservations without furniture and must either rent furnished apartments or live without furniture. Furnished housing is more scarce and more expensive than unfurnished housing. The United Church Committee for Indian Work has been collecting used furniture to help Indian families get a start.

Both Mr. Arnold Matta and Mr. Everett felt that the situation is improving somewhat. Before the war landlords sometimes telephoned the Relief Department office looking for tenants. The housing shortage, right after the war, offered a great inducement to cut up houses into tenements. Then, when the rent ceiling was removed, prices soared. During the past two or three years, landlords have begun to call again.

On the whole, however, there seems to be a great scarcity of decent housing. When one house is condemned the tenants are not likely to find one much better. "Some of these people know me only too well," said Mr. Everett, housing inspector for the Health Department; "I follow them from one slum to another."

#### PROBLEMS RELATED TO HOUSING

Employment: Indian job seekers have no place to clean up, to shave, to bathe, or to wash their clothes. They cannot make themselves presentable. If they do find a job they are packed into crowded rooms with so many others that they cannot get a good night's sleep to prepare them for the next day's work. If lack of sleep is harmful to adults it is even more serious for children.

#### Juvenile Delinquency, Alcoholism, Vice, Jail Records

In the summer Police find it difficult to force teen-agers off of the streets at night into stifling tenements. The cheap housing which the Indian can find and perhaps pay for is in the slum area of the city, where he is likely to be surrounded by harmful influences. Many have no place to go for a relief from the congestion, except to the bars. One reason that so many Indian women and girls are sent to jail is that there is no other safe place to send them; they have no homes. Aid to Dependent Children had 42 unmarried Indian mothers in 1955, and 7 additional unmarried Indian mothers from other counties to supervise, yet the Department of Public Relief had only 25 Indian families, 11 of which had residence in Minneapolis.

Slum areas breed discouragement, lack of self-esteem, and a badly crippled morale. Ambition cannot develop when mere survival is such a problem. Their victims are ripe for alcoholism.

### SOME OF THE CAUSES

Perhaps the chief cause for all this human misery and waste is that we make no adequate preparation for relocation of the Indians from the reservations; we offer little or no help or guidance to people completely inexperienced in urban or modern living. It is significant that those who have been here the shortest time are the most difficult problem.

Perhaps we have said too little about the 20% which, the United Church Committee says, are renting or buying adequate living quarters. These successfully adjusted people disappear into the total community and disassociate themselves from "the Indian problem."

One family, for example, put four children through school and bought their own home. Some of them have lived through appalling conditions -- an "ordeal by slums" kind of purgatory. They demonstrate what the Indian is capable of accomplishing, but we cannot rely on the majority of these well assimilated Indians to lead and guide their brothers. One important reason for this is the sometimes sensational publicity which the Indian has received. Successful members of the group cannot afford to share in the stigma which has been attached to the others.

We have mentioned the fact that bad housing is a contributing factor to unemployment. Substandard housing and unemployment constitute a vicious circle. Until the new arrival can find employment he cannot afford better housing, unless he is assisted in some way. Seasonal employment presents some of the same problems as unemployment.

One person who has been willing to assist the unemployed and the seasonally unemployed in the past has been the landlord of substandard housing, who gives him credit on his rent. This is one reason why the Indian has not become more interested in public housing. The subject of public housing will be more fully discussed in a separate report.

We have mentioned the generosity and hospitality of the Indian as one reason for the overcrowding. We must not overlook, however, the profit motive which explains the continued existence of so much substandard, illegal, subdivided, unrepaired, unmodernized housing. Rental of such properties is said to be an extremely profitable business.

AFTERWORD

The Indian Committee started work early in 1956; its Report has been completed during the course of the year 1956.

Earlier study was begun in 1955 when Fred Berger, Mrs. Helen Mudgett, Miss Mary Blake and Miss Julia Breidenbach consulted with Omar Schmidt and Charles Wright of the Community Welfare Council staff on some problems of Indian children. A small committee was then appointed by the Group Work and Recreation Division and various steps were taken to learn of the problem's scope. Mrs. Mudgett, an authority on Chippewa culture spoke to the Executive Committee of the Division and Judge Luther Sletten of the Municipal Court addressed the quarterly meeting of the Division.

Further study during the Summer of 1955 by the small committee provided the basis of a recommendation to the Priorities Committee and to the Budget and Distribution Committee of the Community Chest that funds be allocated for an Indian worker at Elliot Park Neighborhood House.

The foundation for creating the present Indian Committee was laid. Visits were made to the Indian office of the United Church Committee on Indian work, where Reverend and Mrs. David Clark had been working for over two years providing practical and religious assistance to Indian families. The work of Pastor Sihler at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in helping a number of Indians was noted. Unity House was recognized for its employment service for Indian women.

At the same time, public agencies were expressing deep concern over the grave difficulties of many Indians, noting difficulties in obtaining employment and in securing public assistance, except on an emergency basis.

The Minneapolis Committee on Equal Opportunity conducted a study on Indian centers and on Indian housing.

The Minnesota State Welfare Department wanted to improve coordination among the County Welfare Boards of the State. The Interim Legislative Committee on Indian Affairs, chaired by Senator Gerald Mullin was desirous of improving coordination between State and Federal offices, particularly in financing services to Indians.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, particularly its Minneapolis office, was interested in finding out whether a Federal Relocation Office should be set up in the Twin Cities and arranged for an employment and housing study to be made.

Senator Hubert Humphrey prepared a bill to enable establishment of a Minnesota Indian Corporation designed to bring about broad improvement in the total Indian situation in Minnesota.

Even during the Committee's work, some things could be seen happening. The Indian organizations have assumed new strength. The neighborhood worker at Elliot Park Neighborhood House has been able to find employment for a number of men and women and has been the means whereby about 60 Indian children and their parents are now in an active social and recreational program. Work has begun on a broad basis to improve the City workhouse to benefit both Indians and non-Indians. The United Church Committee on Indian work has expanded and fortified its program. Various public and private social agencies have become informed about Minneapolis Indians and find increasing use of their services by Indians. The Community Information Service of the Community Chest reports increased use by Indians.

Participation of Indians on the Committee has meant the development of relationships which should lead to better teamwork between the Indian organizations and the various community agencies.

The regional office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs has joined in the attempt by Minneapolis to help its Indian citizens.

All these things are evidences of widespread concern to work for improvement of the Indian's life and living, so that he might take his place among the other citizens of Minneapolis on an equal footing and with a better chance to improve his standards of living.

This Study has informed us of many things which needed doing and has shown us ways to get some of them done. It will be noted that several of the recommendations imply integration of existing programs or coordination. Some of these suggestions may seem to be duplicative or to overlap. No attempt is made here to develop a crystal-clear over-all program (if that is possible) but it is urged that these services and programs as they come up for consideration, be considered as part of a total approach.